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E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: PTER, SP
SUBJECT: SPANISH MAGAZINE PREDICTS AL KASSAR EXPULSION

REF: DELL/HARRIS TELCON JUNE 25, 1987

1. (LOU) PER REQUEST IN REF TELCON, FOLLOWING IS A BRIEF SUMMARY OF RECENT SPANISH PRESS PLAY ON MILLIONAIRE SYRIAN BUSINESSMAN MUNZAR AL KASSAR. ARTICLES THEMSELVES HAVE BEEN POUCHED TO EUR/WE. WE HASTEN TO POINT OUT THAT THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN THE TWO PART "TIEMPO" SERIES AND THE "INTERVIU" PIECE SHOULD BE TAKEN WITH A GRAIN OF SALT AS THE REPUTATION FOR EDITORIAL RIGOR IS NOT PARTICULARLY GOOD AT EITHER MAGAZINE.

2. (U) THE SPANISH NEWS/FEATURE MAGAZINE "TIEMPO" RAN A TWO PART SERIES ON SYRIAN EXPATRIATE BUSINESSMEN MUNZAR AL KASSAR IN ITS JUNE 15 AND 22 ISSUES. PART ONE CONCENTRATED PRINCIPALLY ON AL KASSAR'S ALLEGED CONNECTIONS TO THE TERRORIST AND DRUG UNDERWORLD. PART TWO RECAPITULATED SOME OF THE SAME INFORMATION ADDING THAT THE GOS IS ACTIVELY CONSIDERING THE EXPULSION FROM SPAIN OF AL KASSAR, ALTHOUGH THE AUTHORS HINTED

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BROADLY THAT AL KASSAR MIGHT WELL BE ABLE TO BUY HIS WAY OUT OF TROUBLE.

3. (U) AMONG OTHER THINGS, SERIES AUTHORS CARLOS BELLO AND LUIS REYES LINKED AL KASSAR WITH THE FOLLOWING:

PARTICIPATION WITH ABU ABBAS IN THE 1978 KIDNAP OF SAUDI BUSINESSMAN HOUSNI SULEIMAN SCUDIAN.

WOUNDING OF PFLP COMMANDO ZAGUI AL HALOU IN MADRID IN OCTOBER 1984.

WOUNDING OF LEBANESE INTELLIGENCE OFFICER ELIAS JOUSSEF

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ASSAD AWAD IN MADRID IN NOVEMBER 1984.

1985 TERRORIST ATTACK IN THE JEWISH QUARTER OF PARIS.

RESCUE (USING HIS PRIVATE AIRPLANE) OF ABU ABBAS FROM YUGOSLAVIA AFTER THE ACHILLE LAURO HIJACKING.

STATED THAT THE AL KASSAR FAMILY IS CLOSE TO RIFAT AL ASSAD, BROTHER OF THE SYRIAN PRESIDENT.

INVOLVEMENT IN THE DRUG TRAFFIC.

SALE OF WEAPONS TO THE "CONTRAS" THROUGH A SUPPOSED CIA FRONT COMPANY IN PANAMA CALLED LAKE RESOURCES.

4. (U) "TIEMPO" ALSO CARRIED AN INTERVIEW WITH AL KASSAR AT HIS MILTI-MILLION DOLLAR ESTATE IN MARBELLA (MALAGA) IN WHICH HE ESSENTIALLY DENIED ALL CHARGES AGAINST HIM WHILE INSISTING THAT HE WAS NOTHING MORE THAN A BUSINESSMAN.

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5. (U) TWO OTHER SPANISH MAGAZINES ALSO CARRIED MENTIONS OF AL KASSAR DURING THE PAST FEW WEEKS. "INTERVIU" (A SOFT PORN/SCANDAL SHEET OWNED BY THE SAME EDITORIAL GROUP WHICH PUTS OUT "TIEMPO") CLAIMED IN ITS JUNE 24 ISSUE THAT AL KASSAR SOLD WEAPONS TO THE COUP PLOTTERS WHO ATTEMPTED TO TOPPLE THE GOVERNMENT IN SIERRA LEON LAST MARCH. "CAMBIO-16" MADE BRIEF MENTION IN ITS JUNE 29 ISSUE OF THE DEATH UNDER UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF AL KASSAR'S 10 YEAR OLD SON. THE BOY WAS APPARENTLY KILLED WHEN AN ELECTRIC/ARMORED GARAGE DOOR CLOSED ON HIM. BARTHOLOMEW

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